

American people know that we should never be complacent when it comes to our rights as citizens and to our responsibilities to our Constitution.

This President, former President Donald Trump, would have shredded the Constitution to keep his office in the Presidency. There is no doubt in my mind.

To think that we reached that stage in history is certainly worth reflection for a moment. What more should we do going forward to make certain that we protect this democracy from the likes of Donald Trump or any of his successors in interest? That, I think, is a major responsibility that we face.

I hope this report from the Senate Judiciary Committee will reopen the conversation. I hope as well that the select committee of the House on the January 6 occurrence, the mob insurrection here at the Capitol—we submitted this evidence to them. I hope it is a benefit to them as they move forward.

I certainly hope that, on a bipartisan basis, we can decide that the ordinary course of action with a valid, legal election deciding the future of this country is always the best route in a democracy.

#### STUDENT LOAN DEBT RELIEF

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there has been a controversy going on the last several years which has really been to the detriment of many good people.

In 2007, Congress made a promise to college students. Here is what we said 14 years ago: If you will give us 10 years of life in public service and you make your student loan payments during that 10-year period of time, at the end of it, America will forgive the remainder of your student debt.

We said that, and more than a million people took us up on the promise. They passed up perhaps higher salaries in more lucrative professions in order to serve the country. Then they discovered at the end of the 10-year period that the loan forgiveness they were promised wasn't coming. Nearly 99 percent of those who applied under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program were denied relief, often for superficial clerical errors, loan servicing mistakes, or other matters beyond their control.

Well, good news: Those days of broken promises are over. Yesterday, the Biden administration announced important changes to this program to help hundreds of thousands of borrowers finally get the relief we promised over 10 years ago. The Education Department estimates the changes will immediately erase the debt of 22,000 borrowers, more than the total number of loans that have been forgiven so far under the program. All told, more than 550,000 borrowers could see a reduction in the amount of additional time they make in payments.

Servicemembers whose loans were deferred while they were on Active

Duty will have those periods of duty applied towards payments, as they should be. This is good news, and it is long overdue.

Many of my Democratic colleagues and I tried for 4 years during the Trump administration to fix this program. They ignored us. So I want to thank President Biden and Education Secretary Cardona for following through on their commitment to fix this important program and recognize the essential work of these public servants who sacrifice for this country and for the people who live here and should receive what we promised—helping hands on their student loans.

#### VACCINES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on another matter, today, President Biden is traveling to Chicago. He arrives with a simple message: Vaccines work.

In Illinois and across the country, vaccine mandates are saving lives and allowing life to return closer to normal. Over the past month, our State has experienced a nearly 40-percent decrease in new COVID cases. We are seeing similar trends around the country.

In the months since the Biden administration announced its policy requiring the majority of Americans to get vaccinated, the United States has finally begun to turn the corner against the delta variant. Over the past 2 weeks—2 weeks—our Nation has seen a roughly 25-percent decrease in new COVID infections. Hospitalizations have decreased by 20 percent, and deaths are down as well.

In Illinois, we are proud to support the Biden vaccine policy. In fact, some of the biggest employers in our State were ahead of the curve. In early July, Loyola Medicine in Chicago was one of the first health systems in America to implement the vaccine requirement. In August, United Airlines, based in Chicago, announced it would require its employees to get vaccinated.

At the time, skeptics questioned whether this would lead to mass resignations or labor shortages. They predicted chaos. Well, much to the dismay of the doomsayers, as of yesterday, more than 99 percent of United Airlines' employees in America have rolled up their sleeves and gotten vaccinated. Every major airline in the country has followed United's lead and introduced a vaccine requirement. This means safer skies for passengers and crew members. It is another big step back to normal.

Unfortunately, not everyone is on board with this science-driven approach. Earlier this week, one of my colleagues from Wisconsin took the floor and made some unfortunate and irresponsible statements about the safety of coronavirus vaccines. This false information, unfortunately, may mislead some people. Senator JOHNSON decided to bring an argument from a Facebook comment section to the floor of the Senate.

So let me say this: More than 700,000 Americans have now died from coronavirus. That is more than the number of Americans who have died in every war since the Civil War combined.

We have the power to prevent more needless deaths from this disease in the form of three remarkably safe and effective vaccines. Fully vaccinated individuals are 10 times less likely to die from COVID, 10 times less likely to be hospitalized, and far less likely to spread the virus.

The strong majority of Americans agree with President Biden's actions. Importantly, the administration's vaccine mandate is saving lives while also providing commonsense exceptions for those limited numbers of people who have medical or religious reasons.

The fact is, the President's vaccine policy is constitutional, evidence-based, and it is what America needs to once and for all put this pandemic behind us.

Still, some of our colleagues continue to oppose it.

Yesterday, the senior Senator from Utah once again introduced legislation that would do away with the President's vaccine policy. It would also allow anyone to sue the government or their employers for any perceived harm from vaccine requirements. What that harm might be is unclear.

Can you imagine the chaos in our courtrooms if the Senator from Utah has his way? Well, you don't have to imagine too hard because some States have already shown us the deadly cost of taking a stand against public health.

There are several States in our country that both threaten to sue the Biden administration and enact the policies on their own to ban vaccine and mask mandates. They include Texas, Florida, Utah, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Georgia. The leaders in these States have gone to extraordinary lengths to stymie public health efforts to save lives.

How has that worked out for these States? What has this dangerous, deadly policy of opposing vaccines and masks meant in those States?

Take a look at the map here.

This was the deadly cost of resisting science and vaccines between July 1 of this year and October 1. Of the 6 States—Texas, Florida, Utah, Arizona, South Carolina, and Georgia—their infection rates per 100,000 people was 4,441 compared to the rest of the country at 2,548 per 100,000. The death rate, sadly, was 54 per 100,000 in these 6 States, 20 in the rest of the country.

I bring this chart to the floor to make it clear that taking a political position is not about polling and deciding what sounds popular to so many people. It is about the life-and-death reality we face with this virus and this pandemic.

These leaders are arguing for a position against vaccines and against masks, and look who is paying the price: the men and women who live in